# The Middlebury Campus

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## MIDDLEBURY COMPLETES RENOVATIONS TO CHRISTIAN A. JOHNSON MEMORIAL BUILDING

By DANIZA TAZABEKOVA
*News Editor*

After over a year of renovations, the History of Art and Architectural Studies (HARC) department will celebrate the re-opening of the Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building on Sept. 28. The building is home to the Architectural Studies program and the Department of Studio Art, as well as the revived Exhibition Gallery and MakerSpace.

Originally constructed in 1968, the Johnson Memorial Building was created as an interdisciplinary center for the fine arts and a space for artistic collaboration. It was designed by architect Jean-Paul Carlhian, who also designed multiple buildings at Harvard University.

Associate Professor of Architecture John McLeod's Middlebury-based architecture firm, McLeod Kredell Architects, was hired by the college at the end of 2019 to begin designing renovations to the Johnson Memorial Building.

Together with a team of consulting engineers and specialists, McLeod's firm led the design process from preliminary research and planning through design development and completion of construction documents. This process spanned from January 2020 through April 2022, including a fifteen-month hold-up during the pandemic.

In the fall of 2021, in the middle of the design process, an anonymous donor made a $10 million gift to improve the building's accessibility in the planned renovation while still preserving its distinctive architectural details. Construction on the building began in May 2022 and continued throughout the year, led by Naylor & Breen Builders — based in Brandon, Vt. — and their team of subcontractors.

Professor Pieter Broucke, associate dean for the arts and architectural studies track director, called the renovation an "adaptive reuse in architecture."

"Rather than starting anew with an entirely new building, the architect, John McLeod, conceived of a virtually new building that incorporates the skeleton of the old building," Broucke wrote. "We basically got a new building for the price of a renovation, and this was really smart thinking in terms of finances, but also environmentally. We would have a lot of leftover material and landfill that needs to be ground up, so this was a sustainable option. We used what we had and we were creative with it."

Prior to the renovation, Johnson was not ADA-compliant and the whole building only had two bathrooms. The building's heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) systems had never been updated adequately, so internal circulation was poor.

The renovation included a variety of updates to the functional necessities in the building, according to Broucke. These updates included simplifying the circulation system throughout the building, installing a new elevator, adding more bathrooms and inserting a new floor by dividing up previously tall spaces. They also added a new entry pavilion, which Broucke hopes will create an area of campus that is something of an "arts agora."

The Architectural Studies Department was previously scattered throughout the building, while Studio Art had limited space for its students. With the new renovations, Architectural Studies now has all of its studios on one floor, and Studio Art has more space for its classes, according to McLeod.

COURTESY PHOTO

*After a multi-year process, renovations on the Johnson memorial building have been completed.*

"Architectural Studies' four studio classrooms were consolidated into the middle floor level, having been previously separated between the first and third floors. This physical proximity will foster the kind of synergy between the studios that is ideal for architectural education. But the renovation will contribute to the student experience for all users of the building," McLeod said.

As director of the Johnson Memorial Building, Colin C. Boyd oversees the day-to-day function of the building. The renovation brought Middlebury's architecture and studio art spaces up to speed facility-wise with peer institutions, according to Boyd.

"Hopefully, it fosters a perception of and greater respect for the passions and professional talents that the Johnson building has hosted for decades," Boyd wrote in an email to The Campus.

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LOCAL

## *Late spring frost creates challenges for local orchards*

By ALEXA BRYANT
*Contributing Writer*

Apple picking is a classic New England fall activity, but an abnormally late frost in May of this year robbed many Addison County orchards of much of their apple crop. Faced with the inability to offer the usual pick-your-own-apples services, farms have been forced to find creative new ways to bring visitors to their groves.

"A frost with this severity is something you might see every 50 to 100 years," said Ben Rule, the director of sales and marketing at Champlain Orchards in Shoreham, Vt..

In the six years he has spent at Champlain Orchards, Rule said he has never seen a frost so devastating.

Champlain Orchards lost all of their cherries, peaches and plums, and 30 to 40 percent of their pear and apple crops. The main factor influencing which crops were affected was the timing of the frost, Rule said. In May, many of the fruit trees had already started to bloom and become pollinated, and some had even started to bear fruit. Those that had already started to bear fruit were more affected than later-season apples. If the frost had occurred a few weeks earlier, before the bloom, it would not have had as much of an impact because the trees would not have been as vulnerable, according to Rule.

Even with the majority of their apples spared, Champlain Orchards is still facing some challenges this fall. A smaller crop yield means less visitation and less business due to fewer pick-your-own-apples opportunities. In an effort to bring people and business in, the orchard has created a Cider Garden and opened a tasting room serving flights, full pours, slushies and local food. Along with these initiatives, every Friday night the orchard is holding a Cider Garden Cinema, showing 90s throwback movies on their lawn.

Rule said another challenge the orchard faces this season is encouraging people to buy the remaining apples in spite of their wrinkled, knobby skins resulting from the frost.

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JT TITMUS/COURTESY PHOTO

*Local musical artist, Sister Speak, performs at Happy Valley Orchard as part of their Fall Concert Series.*

## *Middlebury mourns death of Evelyn Mae Sorensen '25*

By RYAN McELROY
*Managing Editor*

Evelyn Mae Sorensen '25 has passed away at Middlebury College. She was found in her dorm room in Forest Hall after 10 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 19.

Having arrived at Middlebury three years ago from Lincoln City, Ore., Sorensen was a double major in Earth and Climate Sciences and Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies. They also worked as a research assistant in the Earth and Climate Sciences department. Outside of the classroom, Sorensen enjoyed the outdoors and participated in the Middlebury Mountain Club, serving as a trip leader multiple times.

In addition to her studies, Sorensen was actively engaged with the town of Middlebury, working at local businesses such as Haymaker Buns, Little Seed Coffee and American Flatbread.

A message from President Laurie Patton and Vice President for Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka on Sept. 20 reflected on how those close to Sorensen saw her as "kind, caring, and exceedingly generous" to all. Patton and Ruzicka also shared how they were a "dynamic student" who cared deeply about social justice and environmental issues.

The message also noted that although the cause of death is still under investigation, the Middlebury Police Department has determined that foul play was not involved and there is no danger to the college or surrounding community.

In a post to the Middlebury College Community in Vermont Facebook page on Thursday, Sept. 21, Sorensen's mother, Megan Sorensen, wrote an emotional tribute in honor of her daughter.

"We are devastated of her passing, and our hearts are broken. She was kind, intelligent, selfless, and always thought of others before herself. Those who knew her frequently commented about how wonderful of a person she was, and I know she will be incredibly missed by many," Megan Sorensen wrote. "I have lost my beautiful child, my joy, my heart, my everything."

The Sorensen family has opened a fundraiser for donations to create a physical memorial in honor of Sorensen at Middlebury, possibly at the Knoll, according to the fundraiser's GoFundMe page.

In an email to the classes of 2025 and 2025.5 on Sept. 21, Junior Senators Afra Fairooz '25 and Aniketan Pelletier '25 offered their sympathy to those closest to Sorensen and asked the Middlebury community to respect the privacy of their family and friends.

The administration plans to work with Sorensen's family on how the college may best remember her and asks the community to keep them in their thoughts during this difficult time.

*The Campus plans to publish an article in memoriam of Evelyn Mae Sorensen with stories from family, friends and peers in the coming weeks. If you would like to contribute memories of Sorensen for this story, please email campus@middlebury.edu.*


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# Students navigate recent Covid-19 surge on campus

By JESSICA LI
*Contributing Writer*

Though many experts now consider Covid-19 to be endemic, the virus continues to impact the lives of Middlebury students this fall. Since the beginning of the semester, there has been a surge in Covid-19 infections among Middlebury students. While such an increase in cases has impacted students' academic and social lives to varying degrees, some students told The Campus that they believe the school's response to the surge has largely been insufficient and unhelpful.

The college's current Covid-19 protocols align with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC recommends that anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 isolate themselves for at least 5 days after the onset of symptoms and wear a mask when they must be around others at home and in public.

"As COVID-19 has become endemic, we have resumed normal operations, while continuing core health and safety measures to minimize the potential of its impact," Dean of Students Derek Doucet and Associate Vice President for Student Health and Well-being Barbara McCall wrote in an email entitled "Prearrival Health Update" to students on Aug. 30.

Free masks are currently available at the Davis Family Library circulation desk and the Human Resources office in Marbleworks as long as supplies last, according to the college's Covid-19 updates webpage. Students can pick up free test kits at the Health Center, or purchase them at Midd Express, Bi-Hall and the College Bookstore, with a limit of four tests per person. Some students said they have found the availability of supplies to be limited on campus, leading them to purchase their own masks and rapid tests.

David Goldsmith '23.5 said he was disappointed with the college after his recent experience having Covid-19. Goldsmith began feeling ill on Sept. 12, the second day of classes, and stayed in quarantine for six days.

Since it was the first week of classes, Goldsmith did not feel too stressed about keeping up with work despite his absences. While one of his professors was accommodating, helping him zoom in to class, Goldsmith's other professors left it up to him to zoom in through friends' laptops, a task he said he likely would not have undertaken had he been a first-year student who knew fewer people in the class.

"I think the school should definitely still be offering hybrid classes. Like, they had the infrastructure at one point and I don't necessarily think they've gotten rid of it. And when I was abroad, my university recorded every single lecture, and I just don't think it would be that outrageous for Midd to consider doing something similar," Goldsmith said.

Amy Morsman, professor of history and first-year seminar program director, wrote in an email to The Campus that she does not expect students to attend class remotely while recovering from Covid-19. Rather, she wrote, she would prefer that students focus on feeling better physically, and then make an appointment with her to catch up on what they missed once they have recovered.

"We all still need to operate with a generous dose of flexibility while keeping the lines of communication open," Morsman wrote.

Patricia Saldarriaga, professor of Luso-Hispanic Studies, said that without the school providing official numbers, she has relied on students' emails to inform her about class absences from Covid-19, which she says will not affect their general maximum absence limit.

During the first week of classes, Saldarriaga told her students to identify a fellow student to share notes with or to zoom each other in if one of them tests positive for Covid-19. She plans to teach online if she tests positive or experiences symptoms.

One student, who wished to remain anonymous, tested positive for Covid-19 on Sept. 16, and self-isolated until Sept. 21. The student told The Campus in an email that they found the lack of accessible supplies to be a challenge during their quarantine, forcing them to purchase their own tests and masks.

"I feel like putting the responsibility to limit the spread and protect community health on the individual student is what is contributing to this outbreak/surge on campus right now," the student wrote.

The student added that they hope the school will start to take more responsibility in providing the necessary resources, such as tests, masks and to-go boxes in the dining hall for people infected with Covid-19.

The student also shared that they reached out to the Center for Health and Wellness for guidance when they tested positive, and received an email response within a couple of hours. They said that the Center for Health and Wellness's email response was somewhat helpful, as they sent the student links to the most up to date CDC guidelines on self-isolation while infected with Covid-19, and answered their other questions.

Parton Health Center told The Campus they were unable to comment on the Covid-19 surge due to time constraints.

Similar to Goldsmith's experience, the student added that it can often be difficult for students to attend classes while self-isolating and recovering from the virus.

"Even though I attended all my classes via zoom and kept up with the readings, attending class via zoom was not the same as being in person and I was not prepared to take an exam so I had to get an extension for that exam," they wrote.

A lack of flexibility from their professors further exacerbated the challenge of keeping up with their academic work, the student added.

"Overall I felt like my professors were not very understanding or sympathetic and trying to keep up with academics when I was sick and even now when I feel like I am still recovering has been extremely stressful," they wrote. "I reached out to my Dean because I was really overwhelmed with the pressure to keep up with academics while I was sick and he just said it was up to me to figure things out with each professor individually."

Jennifer Sellers, dean of the first year experience, said that the deans support students who have Covid-19 in the same way they would if those students had the flu.

"Once students are feeling well enough to engage with their academics again, they should work with their professors directly to develop a plan to get caught up on any missed work. What this looks like for each class will depend on the policies outlined on the course syllabi," she wrote in an email to The Campus.

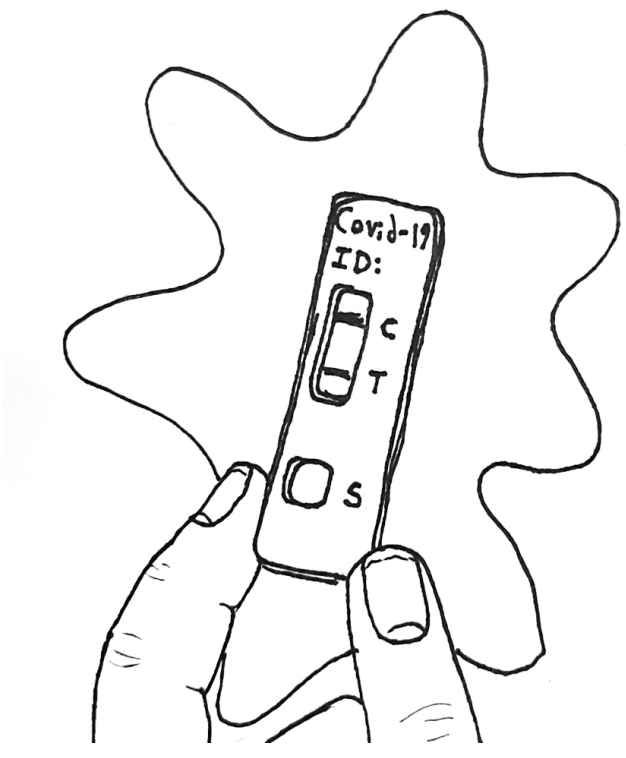
Sellers recognized the difficulty of catching up on work while recovering from an illness, and encouraged students to utilize time management support in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTLR) to help form plans.

Changchang Ma '26 has had contact with many friends who have found themselves in similar situations. Ma wrote in an email to The Campus that she believes that more communication from the administration, health center and professors would alleviate the anxiety felt by some students who contract Covid-19.

"Perhaps the college can let the professors know that students are struggling with Covid-19... and ask them to be more understanding with students during this period of time," Ma wrote.

*Editor's note: Managing Editor Katie Futterman '24 and Editor in Chief Maggie Reynolds '24 contributed reporting.*

*Changchang Ma '26 is an online editor for The Campus.*




SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

# FALL FAMILY WEEKEND COMES EARLY THIS YEAR

RYAN MCELROY/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*Fall foliage in full bloom during Fall Family Weekend at Middlebury in 2022.*

By MANDY BERGHELA
*Local Editor*

The beginning of autumn on campus brings with it the annual Fall Family Weekend, eagerly awaited by many students and families as a chance to reunite. This year, however, parents will touch the ground on campus before many of the leaves do.

Last year, Fall Family Weekend fell between Oct. 7–9, in line with past years when it was held on the second or third weekend of October. But this year, it will occur from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1.

According to Meg Storey Groves '85, associate vice president of Alumni and Parent Programs, Fall Family Weekend is scheduled to avoid other calendar conflicts while also staying within the range of three to five weeks after the semester begins. Storey Groves and other members of the Alumni and Parent Programs Committee are in charge of organizing events during Fall Family Weekend.

"The timing is driven by several factors including the need to avoid midterm break weekend and have most athletic teams competing at home," Storey Groves said. "This ensures that families can enjoy a vibrant campus and parents of athletes are able to see their students."

Responsible for scheduling the college's events throughout the year, the Calendar Committee is convened by the associate provost and a faculty council representative, the dean of students, the registrar and the director of event management, who acts as the intermediary with Facilities Services.

"One of the committee's main tasks is to guarantee that there are no scheduling overlaps or conflicts among these programs, contributing to the reason in which Fall Family Weekend had to occur earlier than usual," said Leroy Graham, associate provost of planning, who sits on the committee.

Despite the change in timing of Fall Family Weekend this year, there are about 1,200 family members registered in advance for the weekend, according to Storey Groves.

"The weekend is important in that it gives families a chance to learn more about and enjoy what Middlebury has to offer for their students from the classroom to the athletic fields to the many extracurricular opportunities," she added.

Many students look forward to Fall Family Weekend each year. Michael Eller '24 said that he and his parents enjoy the opportunity to experience what fall in Vermont has to offer.

"Family weekend is a great time to show my family what my day-to-day life at Middlebury looks like," Eller said. "My parents love coming up to Vermont to explore Middlebury, meet friends of mine, and spend quality time with my twin and I, so this weekend is always one of my family's favorites throughout the year."

The weekend offers a variety of programs for students and families alike to attend. This year, programming includes Shabbat and Sukkot Welcome Services and Dinner, ski lift rides at the Snow Bowl, a poetry workshop with Writer in Residence Emerita Julia Alvarez '71 and the Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival, celebrating 20 years at the Knoll.

The earlier timing changed plans for some families this year, however. Ella Bode '24 said that because her parents just came to drop her off at school three weeks ago, it would not make any sense for them to come back so soon, considering they would have to drive 14 hours from North Carolina up to Vermont.

"I am really sad that I won't be able to see my family over fall this semester," Bode said."As I get older, my time with my family becomes less and less, so any time set aside where we can make memories together is especially cherished."

Bode also noted that Fall Family Weekend will no longer occur during the height of the fall foliage season, a draw for some families to travel to Vermont, as the peak is typically mid- October.

For families unable to visit during Fall Family Weekend, there are a number of events scheduled on other weekends this fall, which are open to the public and can be found on the college Events Calendar.

# *Facilities Services works to address mice problem, construction noise affecting Coffrin Hall*

**By ELLIE TRINKLE**
*Contributing Writer*

This semester, residents of Coffrin Hall, one of Middlebury's predominantly sophomore residence halls, have recently experienced both noise from the construction of the new first-year residence hall and a mice infestation. Though these issues have impacted students' experience over the first weeks of the semester, Facilities Services are attempting to address the noise complaints while ensuring that the dorm construction project continues to run on schedule.

Makayla Reed '26, a resident of Coffrin Hall, said that her first encounter with a mouse was during the early arrival period on campus on Aug. 30 at about 11 p.m. near the fourth floor entrance. Reed was helping a friend move in when she came face-to-face with the mouse, so she didn't take immediate action.

"However, the next day the mouse was in my room," Reed told The Campus. "That was pretty awful. I didn't know what to do. I just stopped what I was doing to start recording and the mouse froze so we had a little staring contest until it scurried away under my door."

Reed also noticed that some of the snacks in her room had been opened and nibbled on the day before, but did not think much of it. After seeing the mouse in her room, she put it together that the mouse had eaten the snacks and called Public Safety, who jokingly said they could "write the mouse a parking ticket," and directed her to contact Facilities instead.

The following day, Reed called Facilities, who offered to give her a mouse trap. Reed explained that she had seen multiple mice, and that there seemed to be a mouse infestation in the building, and Facilities promised to put up a number of traps around the residence hall.

"That night, I went to walk around Coff to see if there were mouse traps set up, and not only did I not find traps, but instead I found a new mouse," Reed said. "I knew it was different because it was much smaller than the one in my room the night prior. This was incredibly frustrating because not only did I call early that morning to make sure they had ample time to set up traps, but now I knew that Coffrin had a mice problem, not just a singular mouse."

Reed continued to communicate with Facilities about the mouse problem, and the following day they put up mouse traps around the building.

Jodie Keith, manager of Custodial and Support Services, said that mice complaints around this time of year are common, so Facilities has developed standard protocols for when the issue arises.

In addition to placing mice traps around the residence hall, Keith said a carpenter checked for any potential entry points to the building and sealed them up. "We also contacted the Pest Control contractor that we use on campus, and they set bait stations around the exterior of Coffrin," she added.

Since then, Reed has not had any more encounters with mice and Keith has not received any additional reports about mice. Kieth said that if more mice are seen in Coffrin, Custodial and Support Services will reassess the issue and work with the pest control contractor to find a solution.

The Campus has previously reported on similar animal infestations in residence halls such as the Inn on the Green in fall 2022.

In addition to the mice problem, the recent construction noise has also impacted the living environment for students in Coffrin. Over the summer, the college announced the start of construction on a new first-year residence hall, which is scheduled to be completed by spring 2025. Norm Cushman, associate vice president of operations, and Michael Moser, director of facilities services, are the co-managers of the project.

"The current work program involves site excavation and construction of the building's concrete foundations," Cushman said. "The construction site was flooded during heavy rains in July. As a result, the project schedule was delayed by three weeks as crews had to remove a significant volume of mud from previously excavated areas. Ledge removal (the hammering noise) was then extended into the start of the fall semester."

Coffrin Hall resident Adelle MacDowell '26 said that when they first arrived on campus, the construction had a major impact on their ability to sleep peacefully anytime during the hours of 6:30 a.m. through 5 p.m. for five or six days of the week. MacDowell lives on the third floor in Coffrin North, which directly faces the construction site.

"It was impossible to sleep through the noise, even with our windows closed and white noise," MacDowell said. "My roommate and I could hardly have a conversation in our room, and many days I developed a headache by the afternoon if I spent too much time in my room. It was frustrating not to have my room feel like a space where I could relax and do work."

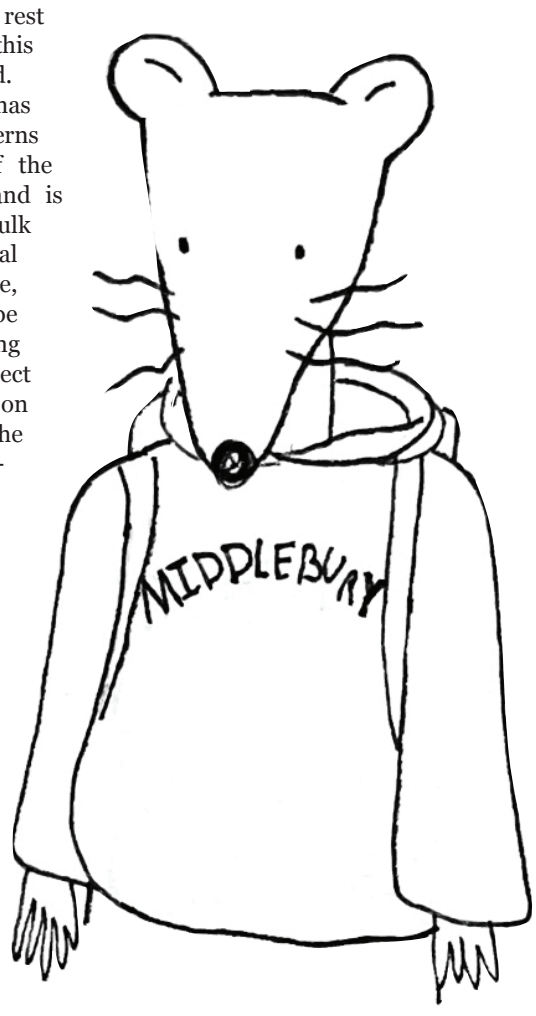
MacDowell said they are glad that the construction is not as noisy anymore, especially on weekends, but that does not change the major disruption during the first few weeks of school.

"The noise and disruption of the construction outside of Coffrin has had a decidedly negative impact on my learning, living and rest here at Middlebury this fall," MacDowell said.

Cushman has heard student concerns about the noise of the ledge hammering and is optimistic that the bulk of the ledge removal work is now complete, so the noise should be less prominent moving forward. The project is now proceeding on schedule after the previous flooding-induced delays.

"Should further ledge issues become apparent as excavation continues, further hammering may be required," Cushman said. "The next phase of the project, erection of the building's steel frame, will begin this fall."

Although the semester got off to a rocky start for some Coffrin residents due to the mice problem and construction noise, students and Facilities remain optimistic that the problems have been or will soon be resolved.




*Editor's note: Adelle MacDowell '26 is a layout editor for The Campus.*

# MIDDLEBURY COMPLETES RENOVATIONS TO CHRISTIAN A. JOHNSON MEMORIAL BUILDING

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Broucke added that he hopes the newly-renovated Johnson Memorial Building will do for the visual arts what Bi-Hall did for the sciences, resulting in increased academic and co-curricular interest from students.

Boyd is also the manager and curator of the new Johnson Exhibition Gallery. His vision is for the gallery to serve as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration as well as a secure and accessible venue for visual art produced by students, faculty, staff and professional artists.

"I encourage members of the campus community to propose exhibitions, performances, and gatherings to engage in dialogues on contemporary issues across disciplines," Boyd wrote.

Boyd added that he hopes exhibitions across academic departments will be displayed in the space, encouraging the local community to come view the exhibitions and engage with the campus. He added that another goal of the gallery is to host programs that promote interactions with educational and non-profit organizations from local and regional communities.

"My goal for this year is for us to realize exhibitions that I have explored in concept with students, faculty, and staff in the sciences, history, gender studies, dance, theater, studio art, and architecture fields to create unique exhibitions fostering intellectual and creative wonder, inviting interaction from the community in the form of response and interpretation," Boyd wrote.

The recently renovated building also houses a new MakerSpace, a collaborative workspace where creators can share equipment, knowledge and inspiration with one another. The space offers equipment like large graphics tablets, sewing machines, laser cutters, 3-D printers and a robotic arm, according to the Addison Independent. It is open to all members of the community, though it is important for individuals to know how to safely use the equipment.

Daniel Houghton, an industrial design teacher at the college and the manager of the new MakerSpace, is working to set up a form of training where anyone can come in and find some basic video tutorials.

"There's a hunger on campus for hands-on experiential learning. There are a lot of students interested in Architecture and Design. I'm now offering a regular Intro to Industrial Design. And I'm tremendously excited about the potential here, especially the potential in connecting college students with experts and beginners in Addison County," Houghton wrote in an email to The Campus.

McLeod added that during the renovation process they discovered a time capsule from 1967 when the original stair walls in Johnson were demolished, though water damage unfortunately led it to become a pulpy mush. A new time capsule with a letter and items from the present day was waterproofed and buried inside the building.

Students can see the renovation for themselves at the building's grand reopening on Sept. 28 from 4:30–8:30 p.m.

COURTESY PHOTOS

# LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: LITTLE SEED COFFEE ROASTERS

*Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.*

Olivia Mueller/The Middlebury Campus

*Olivia sips on an oat milk latte.*

**By OLIVIA MUELLER**
*News Editor*

Monday, Oct. 2 will mark the two-year anniversary of Little Seed Coffee Roasters opening in downtown Middlebury. For husband and wife co-owners Anthony and Maggie Gerakos, this milestone is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and successes they have encountered so far operating the local café-roastery. It is also an opportunity to think about what is in store for Little Seed, entering its third year in operation.

After moving from Brooklyn to Middlebury in 2021, the Gerakos spent their first year at Little Seed getting settled in the community, ramping up the amount of coffee they roasted and ironing out operations in the café space.

Little Seed now maintains several wholesale accounts to provide coffee weekly to local businesses, such as the Swift House Inn in downtown Middlebury.

"We've been able to kind of focus on our wholesale side of the business a lot more than we did in the first year because we have a really great team," Anthony said.

Their beans are also available for retail purchase at places such as Momma's Grocery and Wine in Cambridge, Mass., and Putnam's Vineyard in White River Junction, Vt. Little Seed's beans have previously also been sold at businesses that are currently on hiatus or closed, such as Farmer and the Bell in Quechee, Vt., and the beloved Darwin's Ltd., also in Cambridge.

The wholesale and retail side of the couple's business has grown naturally over time.

"A lot of our wholesale accounts right now have come to us. It's very organic," Maggie said.

Some customers come into Little Seed specifically to buy retail bags of their coffee grounds to make at home, which has created an exponential growth in business for the store since their first year, according to Anthony. "That's just really awesome to have happened," he added.

Due to the growing wholesale volume, the coffee that Little Seed roasts is currently distributed in a roughly 60–40 percent split between wholesale and café sales.

With an established team covering the majority of café operations — taking orders, making drinks and keeping the area clean — the Gerakos have had time to continue developing their menu offerings at Little Seed.

The maple latte was a non-negotiable for their menu. Maggie recalled a customer who came by their first week and set a jar of maple syrup on the counter, declaring it a necessity on the menu of any Vermont café. But in the early days, the couple wanted to keep things simple.

"When we opened we didn't really have any specialty lattes. And that was intentional," Anthony said. "We wanted to open, we wanted to…hone in on certain things." Doing the basics right first was key to them.

Fortunately for flavor fiends, Little Seed has since broadened its horizons with rotating seasonal flavor options.

"It's fun and we like to do things that are a little bit unusual," Maggie said.

Coming up with offerings like lavender turmeric, orange cocoa and key lime pie requires lots of tinkering and experimentation.

"We experiment with a lot of things that actually don't make it onto the menu. And then the ones that make the menu, we're really excited about," Anthony said.

For their recent key lime pie latte creation, the team dehydrated limes, ground them into a powder, and combined it with brown sugar to make into a housemade syrup. The flavor was the brainchild of a meeting between Anthony and lead barista Stefan Eisler, who has been with Little Seed since they opened in fall 2021.

Not all flavors are successful, though.

"I took palo santo and I tried to make a syrup with it. And it just kind of tasted like drinking like Vicks VapoRub," Anthony said with a laugh. But the failed flavors make successes all the sweeter.

"We have something planned for the fall right now," Anthony said.

Spoiler alert: It is a chamomile-fenugreek latte with a hint of honey.

Operating in Middlebury has been both an advantage and a challenge, the couple said..

"There's, I think, seasonality and a slight dependency on the comings and goings of college," Anthony said.

It can be difficult for them to balance a staff with such large fluctuations throughout the year and even throughout a day.

Still, the Gerakos appreciate being in a small town with a tight-knit, supportive community. "I think that's definitely one of the benefits of opening like here versus [Brooklyn]," Maggie said. "People will want you to succeed and they feel more invested because you're part of their town."

Opening in a space previously occupied by other cafés has meant that Little Seed has had to work to clearly identify who they are and how they are different from their predecessors. Previous businesses in the space, such as the Daily Grind and Carol's Hungry Mind, offered food menus, but Little Seed chose not to do so.

"People come in in the winter and [ask] 'What's your soup of the day?' and I'm like, 'Coffee,'" Maggie joked.

Little Seed does offer a selection of pastries made by local bakers Friday Harvest and Baked Goods as well as Blue House Bakeshop, and has worked to add more savory options to their menu. While Little Seed's focus is coffee first and foremost, the Gerakos see the ability to offer delicious food options from other local entrepreneurs for customers to enjoy with their coffee as a win-win.

Anthony added that Friday Harvest and Blue House are both small businesses with female owners that do not operate from a brick and mortar store. "We see [doing business with them] as a positive that we're able to support these people. They're great at what they do," he said.

Little Seed is located at 24 Merchant's Row in downtown Middlebury. The café is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

# *BRISTOL HARVEST FESTIVAL BRINGS LOCAL COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR 24 YEARS*

**By ASA STONE**
*Staff Writer*

Asa Stone/The Middlebury Campus

*Vendor's art for sale in a booth at the Harvest Festival.*

While the word "harvest" is typically associated with farms, gardens and Thanksgiving, this year's Bristol Harvest Festival had much more to offer — 70 vendors sold crafts, local goods and food while local musicians performed live music all day.

The Addison County Chamber of Commerce and the Bristol Recreation Department sponsored the 24th annual Bristol Harvest Festival on Saturday, Sept. 23. The event took place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Bristol Town Green. With attendees' cars lined up on Route 116 before Main Street was even visible, the festival would have been difficult for anyone to miss.

The festivities also featured trolley rides into town with New Haven, Vt.-based Thornapple Farm, and pony rides for children hosted by the Harvest Moon Valley Ranch in Starksboro, Vt.

Phil Summers, executive director of the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, sat down with The Campus at the festival to discuss the event's community-building goals.

"It's a fun family event to bring people to Bristol who don't normally come here on a regular basis and also to work for the people of Bristol and hopefully help with businesses downtown," Summers said.

When asked what their favorite booth was, many attendees of the festival said that Green Mountain Kettle Corn is a must-try. Maple kettle corn, maple cotton candy and maple syrup are some of their best-known offerings, appealing to adults and kids alike at the festival.

In addition to the ample goods available for purchase, the festival also offered visitors the opportunity to learn about several community services.These groups included Vermont Gas Systems, a Vermont-based integrated energy services company promoting a pump water heating system, and Addison County Readers, an organization working to improve literacy rates in preschool children through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Bristol Have-A-Heart Food Shelf, Mountain Community Health Center and Northlands Job Corps Center also participated in the event.

The music performances were all by local artists — Rick Ceballos and Lausanne Allen, Bob Recupero, Whiskey & Wine, and the Michele Fay Band all performed under the gazebo in the Town Green. Summers said that the people of Bristol want to hear "folky, homey and soft-rock" music, especially during a family event. The audience's enjoyment came through as one festival-goer danced happily on the grass song after song.

In addition to supporting local businesses and community members, the Bristol Harvest Festival works with national organizations such as The Three Day Stampede Toward the Cure for Cystic Fibrosis, which held a Walk-a-thon through Bristol Village and a 5k Run from Mt. Abraham High School to the Bristol Green. Green Mountain Health also offered health exams for kids during the event.

While many attendees of the Harvest Festival came from Addison County, the festival's large size can attract people from all over Vermont, Summers said. Large community events like the annual harvest festival support not only the artists and craftspeople selling from booths, but also help bring tourism to small towns in Vermont, he added.

"At the Chamber, we market our members, we market tourism to the county, and we advocate in Montpelier for businesses and nonprofits that are members of ours," Summers told The Campus. He explained that in many ways, the Bristol Harvest Festival functions as a marketing event for all three of these avenues — it encourages tourism, helps local businesses increase their visibility and brings the community together.

Especially in late September through October when leaf-peeping is at its prime, many people travel significant distances to experience the beauty of fall in Vermont. Nestled at the base of the Green Mountains, the Bristol Harvest Festival is the perfect setting to experience Vermont autumn at its finest.

# Dean of Culture and Climate at Middlebury Union Middle School resigns, citing racism

By SARAH MILLER
*Editor at Large*

When Esther Charlestin, former dean of culture and climate at Middlebury Union Middle School (MUMS), went on summer vacation in June, she had no idea the break would be a permanent one. Charlestin had only been employed at the school for a year before she resignd from her position, effective Sept. 1.

Charlestin, who had previously served as the residential director and the assistant director of community standards at Middlebury College as well as a town of Middlebury selectboard member, was attracted to the job posting's mention of restorative practices in tandem with school discipline.

Restorative justice is a practice that centers on healing the harm inflicted rather than utilizing punishment to achieve accountability, with the aim of preventing future offenses.

After serving as a co-leader of the Addison Central School District's Advisory Committee for Equity, working on diversity and equity recommendations for the Addison County School District's strategic plans, Charlestin was excited to implement her experience and vision at Middlebury Union. However, the problems at the middle school began for Charlestin almost immediately.

"[The] idea they had for the role and the job I did was very different," she said. "What I envisioned was to focus on the climate and culture piece. There wasn't space for that."

Instead, Charlestin's primary responsibility was to discipline students with punitive punishments such as detentions and reprimands before sending them back to class. She enforced these punitive procedures as the school's code of conduct prescribed because, as someone new to the school and one of the few employees of color, Charlestin felt it was pertinent for her to build trust within the community while under scrutiny.

"Being a Black woman, I knew things would be questioned when I made a decision," Charlestin said.

Suspecting students would not respond well to the punitive nature of the code of conduct, Charlestin decided to collect data over the course of her first year as dean so that she could use numbers to inform adjust policies for the next school year, according to an op-ed she wrote that the Addison Independent published in late August.

Throughout the year, Charlestin experienced what she called a series of microaggressions, which eventually began to escalate into full on attacks. In one instance, she saw graffiti in the girl's bathroom which read, "I Hate (N-WORD) Dean." A few months later, while disciplining a student, Charlestin was called a "F-ing N-WORD."

Charlestin informed the school of these incidents, but, according to her op-ed, wrote that she often felt alone at Middlebury Union Middle School and "the response [from school administration] was underwhelming at best."

Charlestin also noted in her op-ed another incident during a staff meeting when she spoke out about teachers' use of harsher disciplinary action towards Black students than white students for similar offenses. Her statement was followed by silence, demonstrating what Charlestin described as "the lack of tools, awareness, and knowledge around [the issue]."

In an email to the school community in response to Charlestin's resignation on Sept. 1, Middlebury Union Middle School Principal Michaela Wisell wrote, "It is unacceptable that Esther experienced these acts of racism. We do want each of you to know that in coordination with central office administrators, MUMS administration responded to every allegation of student wrongdoing including any and all acts of racism with a thorough investigation and immediate consequences."

Still, Charlestin told The Campus that punishments within the handbook's punitive framework failed to address the root cause of why students were committing racist acts. She said it seemed that the middle school handled things the best they knew how but it felt like they were not equipped, and were making it up as they went.

As it is currently written, the middle school's handbook outlines punishments for "hazing, harassment, and bullying," without any mention of racism.

This past May, Charlestin signed a contract to return to Middlebury Union Middle School for the 2023-24 school year, but the stress of the position was already taking a mental and physical toll on her. According to her op-ed, Charlestin visited the hospital numerous times, increased her therapy to twice a week and was diagnosed with depression. She said her body was shutting down, but she continued to push through by showing up to work every day, as so many people of color do in predominantly white spaces.

COURTESY PHOTO
*Esther Charlestin was the former dean of culture and climate at MUMS.*

When Charlestin had time off in July, she had the space to reflect on her time at Middlebury Union Middle School and ultimately made the decision not to return for the following year. She emphasized the difficulty of sacrificing her source of income and insurance by leaving the position.

Wisell thanked Charlestin for her work and stated that the Addison County School District would soon be implementing changes, pending school board approval, to the strategic plan, according to an email to staff at the middle school.

"Our MUMS community, like the world around us, has significant work to do to ensure that all students and staff feel safe, welcome, and seen," Wisell wrote in the Sept. 1 email.

As part of a plan announced last year in response to incidents of hate speech, this year school leaders in the Addison County School District will participate in a monthly focus group on anti-bias leadership and work with an expert consultant on increasing inclusion in the school district's BIPOC staff and students.

Charlestin's is the latest in a series of resignations of high profile Black women in Vermont in recent years. Both Winooski's first equity director, Yasamin Gordon, and Burlington's first racial equity director, Tyeastia Green resigned from their positions, citing racism as a factor.

Since her resignation from Middlebury Union Middle School, Charlestin has moved on to a new opportunity. She is both founder and CEO of newly created consulting organization Conversation Compass, which aims to facilitate conversations about race in school districts, hospitals and workplaces across Vermont.

Charlestin spoke at the Addison County School District school meeting on Sept. 25 to encourage them to adjust their policies to better suit the BIPOC community.

"Policy is where we should start," Charlestin said."That's where we start to shift the system."

# Chim Chimney plans new store in Middlebury, opens food trailer

By AUDREY PEIKER
*Staff Writer*

Chelsea Griggs and Armistice Travis Ryan knew they wanted to bring something unique and different to the downtown Middlebury community. So, when the storefront opened up, they jumped on the opportunity to purchase 40 Main Street, the former home of Main Street Stationary. All they needed was an idea.

Chimney cakes, or Kürtőskalács — Hungarian sweet cakes made with a yeasted dough wrapped into a cone shape and filled with a variety of flavors — soon caught Griggs' eye on Pinterest, and she knew they would be perfect for the new store front. 10 months later, the couple is in the process of renovating the downtown space to open Chim Chimney Bakery in April 2024, with hopes of bringing a new treat to the Middlebury community.

"They're so unique and so different, we knew it wouldn't hurt any existing business," Griggs said. "We're excited for the opportunity to introduce them to a diverse group of people," she added, explaining why the couple chose this treat to focus on for their store.

After settling on their idea, the couple dove headfirst into learning everything they could about chimney cakes. They took a road trip around Europe for a week to learn about the treat's origins and traveled to different areas to taste various chimney cakes and determine which they liked the best, what tastes and styles they wanted to bring back to Middlebury.

Their favorites were from DoberKurtos Academy in Slovenia, where they stayed with the academy's owners to learn more about the dessert. The family taught them cooking techniques and how to use all the equipment, which the couple purchased and brought back to the US.

Since returning to Middlebury from their training, Griggs and Ryan have been working tirelessly to develop their own recipes. The pair expressed their commitment to using locally sourced ingredients such as dairy from Monument Farms Dairy. Despite facing several renovation delays due to issues finding a contractor, they have gotten to work opening a chimney cakes food truck in the meantime.

"We thought it would be a good way to introduce people [to the business]," Griggs said. Chim Chimney's food trailer made its debut at the Franklin County Field Days in Highgate, Vt., in early August. "The first day people mostly walked by curious and judgmental. But as people started to carry them around, the interest grew," Griggs added .

By their second event at the Addison County Fair and Field Days on Aug. 8–12, the food truck was selling out every day, far more than expected. "We put a lot of time and love into everything we do and produce… it was really nice to have people supportive of our product," Griggs said.

Griggs explained that they are most excited about being on Main Street and giving back to the downtown Middlebury community.

"I love to feed a ton of people and have them be happy," Griggs said. The couple is looking forward to joining existing Middlebury shops downtown and participating in community events such as local festivals and the college's upcoming Fall Family Weekend.

As Griggs and Ryan hoped, the local downtown community is also looking forward to Chim Chimney Bakery's opening.

"I think that having more very unique places in Middlebury is going to help us as a city grow into a really amazing place for people to visit," said Tatiana Dale, general manager of Otter Creek Bakery and Otter East Bakery and Deli. Dale added she was excited by the potential for other companies and entrepreneurs to come into Middlebury and bring something new to the community.

Dale also spoke of the tight knit business community Chim Chimney will be joining.

COURTESY PHOTO/CHIM CHIMNEY
*Chim Chimney Cake's Fruit Cone and Charcuterie, Chimaroni, Taco De Emmy, and Caprese Salad*

"Having that sense of camaraderie with your fellow business owners is really important," Dale said. She said she believes that the most important factor in a business, particularly in a small town like Middlebury, is having a dependable and reliable staff.

Dale also described how having more local businesses will help with community development and create jobs for Vermonters. "Bringing more career opportunities for our local population and people who have been in Vermont for our whole lives is fantastic," Dale added.

Current flavors at the Chim Chimney food trailer include Philly Cheese Steak and Almond Joy. According to the business's website, other flavors to look forward to are a meatball sub with whipped ricotta in a mozzarella cone and a non-dairy option.

Chim Chimney Bakery currently hopes to open in April 2024, but will continue to travel to events in their food trailer and share updates on their Facebook page until then.

# LATE SPRING FROST CREATES CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL ORCHARDS

*Continued from Page 1*

"This fruit is perfect and delicious in every way but aesthetically. It might make the normal consumer cringe and shy away from it," Rule said.

Because of this aesthetic obstacle, Champlain Orchards is looking for ways to get people to buy these "ugly" apples, and is considering discounts as a way of framing these apples as representative of real-life farming.

Still, however, Rule said that Champlain Orchards feels lucky to have so much of their crop intact, even though they may not be the prettiest apples.

"Lots of orchards were completely wiped out or wiped out in a larger fashion than us. To have at least half of our fruit still be viable is a win," Rule said.

Happy Valley Orchard in Middlebury did not emerge from the frost quite as lucky, having lost 98% of its yield this spring.

"This year is the worst it's ever been," JT Titmus '23.5, events manager at Happy Valley Orchard told The Campus. Titmus is one of a few full-time workers at the orchard, routinely working 40 hours a week in addition to his classes at Middlebury.

He explained that some apples are affected by frost every year, but the crop usually remains intact. This year's crop, however, has been almost entirely decimated, Titmus said, putting the orchard at risk of being sold if they are unable to bring in revenue in other ways.

Working with only 2% of their apple crops this year, Happy Valley is allowing visitors to pick their own apples from the healthy crop, assuring them that while the apples may not look perfect, they taste perfectly fine. The orchard is also continuing to make and sell other apple products including donuts, ciders and pies.

While in a typical year Happy Valley makes treats such as donuts and pies with their own apples, this year the orchard used apples imported from southern Vermont orchards that did not experience the detrimental effects of the frost as intensely.

To account for the loss of visitation that apple picking typically brings, Titmus developed a fall concert series to attract people to the orchard. Every weekend through the end of October, Happy Valley is offering free live music and shows put on by local Vermont artists. Titmus said he hopes that these concerts not only help the orchard make it through this season, but also raise awareness of the consequences farmers around the state are experiencing from both the spring frost and the summer floods.

Titmus described Vermont as a community-driven place and emphasized the community's role in helping the orchards make it through this year. College students, specifically, he said, can play a major role by coming out to the orchard to enjoy the concerts and the cider.

Hazel Traw '24, said she was disappointed to learn about the lack of apple picking this year, considering it a Vermont fall tradition. Traw has visited Happy Valley multiple times since her first fall at Middlebury..

"Happy Valley is an important local business. It would be a shame to see it sold," she added.

Traw said she plans to attend a concert at the orchard to show her support for local business, and she hopes that other students will also help out their local orchards this year.

# THE CLUB FAIR:

## *It's not just for first-years*

### Editorial

*The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.*

The fall 2023 Student Involvement Fair was a success. The quad in front of McCullough Student Center buzzed last Wednesday afternoon with club leaders eager to recruit new members and first-years itching to find their extracurricular niches at Middlebury. Some clubs, including Middlebury Ski Patrol, Middlebury Pranksters Ultimate and Riddim World Dance Troupe came prepared with active demonstrations of their clubs' activities. For some of our Board members who are seniors, this sight was bittersweet. Their first club fair in fall 2020 — when the club fair was split over multiple days and held on Zoom — felt like a far cry from this year.

In the past few semesters, we have borne witness to a revitalization of the typical social life at Middlebury. In last spring's Zeitgeist survey, 67.6% of respondents said that student organizations were an important part of their social life at Middlebury. But as a place where students try to "do it all," it can be difficult to strike the right balance between clubs, academics and social life. In these first couple months on campus, we encourage first-years to try anything that sparks their interest and figure out which clubs to commit to down the line. And to upperclassmen: it is never too late to get more involved in extracurriculars that sound interesting, even if it feels weird joining a new club in your final years here. While clubs will naturally look different from year to year as institutional memories change, we are pleased to see the club scene at Middlebury looking vibrant this school year. We hope that this invigorating trend continues with new generations of students at Middlebury.

The fall 2020 Zoom club fair looked substantially different than last week's spectacle of free candy, energetic dancing and blasting music. Board members who attended that year recalled joining breakout rooms on Zoom to learn about extracurriculars that, at the time, had no in-person component. Clubs at Middlebury undoubtedly suffered from lower membership and the need to modify activities to be Covid-19-safe during the 2020-2021 academic year. Then, because some of the students who matriculated during the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters did not immediately go out of their way to join clubs, when campus life looked more "back to normal" in fall 2021, student organizations continued to suffer from low membership and less experienced leadership. Some clubs fizzled out altogether during the pandemic, sadly, not yet to be revived — although you'll find testimonials in these pages this week to the work being done to save these organizations. Younger students, too, whose high school extracurricular experiences were modified by pandemic restrictions may have come to Middlebury feeling detached from their hobbies and less inclined to join clubs relating to their interests at Middlebury.

The plethora of clubs available at Middlebury — from log-rolling and fly-fishing to debate and mock trial — is a point of pride (and advertising) for the college. Because the vast majority of students at Middlebury are not paid for their leadership in clubs, they are involved with these groups simply because they want to be. True, some clubs may look good on a resume or give students experience that translates well to a job after graduation, but many are just for fun. This social atmosphere is a nice change from the way many high school students are involved in clubs just for the sake of getting into college.

Middlebury's extracurricular atmosphere is also relatively uncompetitive and accessible — most clubs at Middlebury do not require auditions or applications to become a member. Some other elite colleges and universities, in contrast, have clubs as competitive to get into as the school itself. There are still a number of competitive clubs at Middlebury, such as the Middlebury Consulting Group, which rejects about 80% of its applicants any given year, and the mens' club soccer team, which had to cut about 50% of students who applied due to high interest and limited spots on the field. While some club sports, theater and musical groups have a natural limit to their membership, we are happy to see how many organizations will welcome as many members as there are students who wish to join.

While there are many students who are involved in seemingly a million clubs at once, there are also students who are not involved in any. In explaining why students choose to be a part of numerous clubs at once, Board members noted that there may be an unhealthy social pressure to "work hard, play hard" at Middlebury, meaning being involved in multiple clubs, doing well in your major(s) while also maintaining a robust social life. The existence of this implicit pressure to be eternally busy is clear in light of how tour guides present college life. Many can truthfully tell prospective students and their families on tours that they're a double major, dabble in Club Tennis and Club Cycling, are a committed member of the Debate Team, write for the school newspaper and work as a tour guide — all at once. This is certainly the image that Middlebury presents to prospective students, given that the admissions page claims "possibilities for engagement are virtually limitless" at the college. We would argue, however, that the pressure for every student to be committed to so many extracurricular activities regardless of their available time or interests is not only unrealistic, but also unnecessary and likely damaging in the long run.

Spreading oneself too thin is never a good idea, but being part of a club oftentimes does not need to be a huge time commitment at all. Wherever possible we encourage student organization leaders at Middlebury to remain flexible and welcome whatever level of commitment their members are able to dedicate at that moment. The good news is that many clubs on campus welcome members of varied commitment levels — The Campus always appreciates new writers, even if they only write once or twice a semester. The Climbing Club also encourages students to come to the wall whenever they want to.

Middlebury students are unapologetically passionate about the things in which they are interested, and the community is supportive of all sorts of student groups. Student plays, sports games, comedy shows and dance performances generally attract large student turn-outs. Clubs are also an opportunity to do things that you may not have the time, money or supplies to be able to do outside of Middlebury, such as ceramics, fly-fishing or the mountain club. Nothing should hold a student back from joining a club except their personal interest. We strongly encourage the college to continue funding financial aid opportunities that ensure all students have equal access to every opportunity on campus and any equipment needed for such activities. We also believe the college must continue to fund clubs to reach their full potential — if clubs are so vital to our campus community, then they must be supported as such.

Extracurricular involvement should be as integral to the Middlebury experience as you wish to make it — a build-your-own-adventure college experience, if you will. At a small college in a small town, clubs are a way for students to meet people with similar interests, exercise, get off campus, form a connection with the town of Middlebury, and/or continue their passions from high school. And upperclassmen, it is never too late to join new clubs, even if you don't know anyone. Enrollment in specific clubs and traditions that clubs pass down from year to year will undoubtedly change as institutional memory shifts, but we are excited to witness a vibrant, revitalized extracurricular culture at Middlebury post-pandemic.

Susanna Schatz

# ADVICE FOR FIRST-YEARS

### Op-Ed

***Charlie Kauffman** is a member of the class of 2023.5.*

To all the first-years,

I'm sure you have already received plenty of advice on how to make the most of the Middlebury experience, so my apologies if I inundate you with similar information. But after spending the last three-and-a-half years in this beautiful part of the world, I think I have some valuable information to share. Now that you're a couple weeks into classes and are beginning to settle in, I figured it was time to provide some recommendations.

Go to some meals without a plan. Meals are an integral part of Middlebury social life, as they're great opportunities to take a break from our busy schedules, catch up with friends and meet new people. At times, the dining halls can be intimidating (during the lunch rush, for example), but they are also a place where people from all corners of campus come together. Some students like to make plans to eat with specific people for each meal, which can be great. However, I really enjoy walking into the dining hall without knowing who will be there. Sometimes I sit with my closest friends, and other times I sit with people I've never met before and strike up a conversation. It's exciting to connect with people you've never met and learn about their life stories or share similar interests with you. From my experience, this adds some variety to life, and it's a great way to meet and get to know students outside of my typical social circles.

You've probably heard this a million times now, but go outside. There are many reasons students choose to attend Middlebury, but one major draw is the remarkable outdoor access. The fall foliage is spectacular, and there are countless places to swim, hike, run, fish and camp. Snake Mountain, the Moosalamoo Recreation Area and the Snow Bowl are all within 25 minutes of campus, and Mount Abraham, Mount Mansfield and Camel's Hump are all great day trips. It's also relatively easy to access the Adirondacks in New York. Lake Dunmore, Silver Lake and the East Middlebury Gorge are all great places to swim close by. The point is, Middlebury is in a remarkable location, and it would be criminal not to take advantage of that.

Go to office hours. One of the primary appeals of a small liberal arts college like Middlebury is that professors are here to teach undergraduate students; they're not focused on graduate students and are far more accessible than at larger universities. Professors tend to be quite prolific in their respective fields and are eager to discuss their work with students. Additionally, these professors genuinely want to get to know you — though they have very busy schedules, professors still carve out time to meet their students. Obviously, it's super helpful to meet with professors while preparing for an essay or exam, but office hours are also a unique opportunity to build relationships that I think really enhance the Middlebury experience.

While those are the three main points I wanted to emphasize, here are some additional quick recommendations:

1) Nordic ski at Rikert Outdoor Center.

2) Sunrise hike the Snow Bowl and then sunset hike Snake Mountain (bonus points if it's on the same day).

3) Go to Dolci, the student-run pop-up restaurant in Atwater (I've actually never been able to get tickets, but it's supposed to be fun).

4) Check the depth of swim spots before you jump in.

5) Attend athletic, fine arts and performing arts events — support your peers.

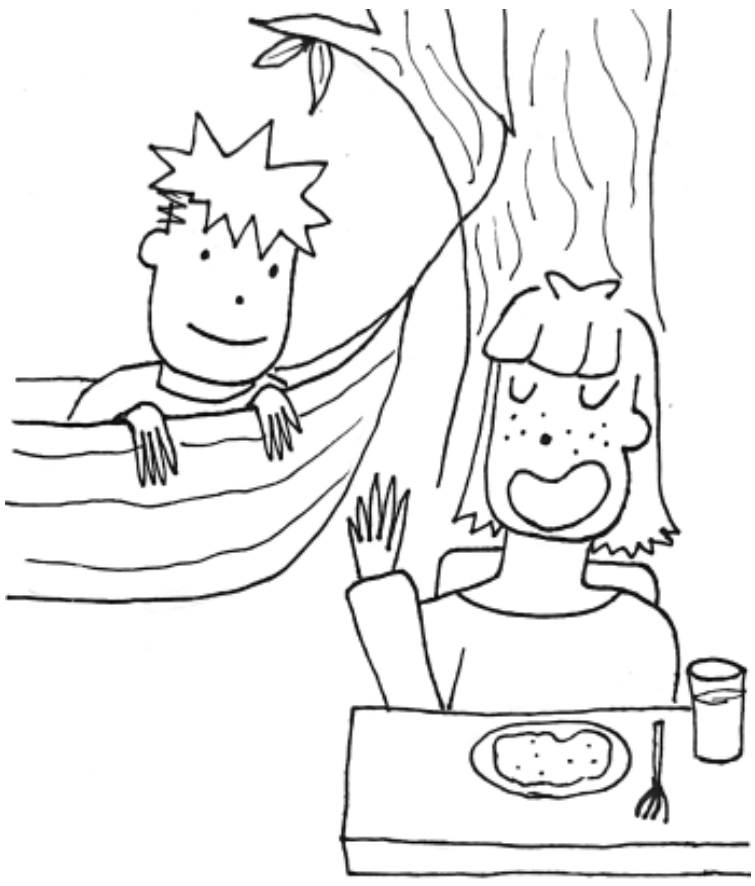
6) Sleep outside (not in a tent).

7) Have a ride lined up before you go to an off-campus event.

8) Be kind to everyone you meet.

9) Try the chocolate chip cookies at Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall, Vt.

By no means is this list exhaustive; it's merely a collection of thoughts I strung together on a Sunday afternoon. Middlebury has its fair share of issues (like any college or university), but it's also a pretty special place. It is a unique community filled with people from fascinating backgrounds who have a desire to learn and better themselves. The remarkable setting in Vermont enhances this community and opens doors to great opportunities. I believe I have made the most of it, and I



Skiles Roberts-Salvador

# Slo-mo-sapiens

## Op-Ed

***Bella Burke and Peyton Belsher*** *are both members of the class of 2023.5 and Burke is an opinions editor.*

We love sloths. We know — it's basic. It's predictable. But we loved them way before they started appearing on mugs and socks (although we proudly own those, too). What sets us apart from these other self-proclaimed 'sloth-luvrs' is that our obsession runs deeper. Sloths have affected the way we move (slower) and sleep (more). Sometimes we'll see them in our dreams or hear them in the trees. Basically, what we're trying to say is that we love sloths more than you do, and this op-ed will not only prove that, but it will also make you oh-so-informed about sloths and their perfection.

Like many other Middlebury students, we decided to take the semester off during the spring of 2021. What ultimately convinced us to take a leave of absence was a once-in-a-lifetime program we found online. For two months, we lived in Costa Rica, and for half of our time there we worked at an animal rescue center and sloth sanctuary.

On our first night, during our very short walk from the gate to our room, we suddenly stood face to face with the world's most beautiful creature. His name was Leon. The majestic two-toed sloth slowly but surely made his way to find a spot for his weekly poo. While this was a sloth sanctuary, Leon wasn't a "member," per se — he hadn't been rescued. He simply chose to live there. And, instead of choosing one of the many sloth-friendly trees to set up camp, he often resided on top of the nearby bird aviary. A silly choice for a silly fella.

The day we met Leon was the day our lives truly began. We cried happy tears because we knew that for the next month, our days would revolve around sloths––feeding them, cleaning up their poop, designing enrichment activities, bottle-feeding the babies and taking them to their mini jungle gym.

During our time in paradise, we kept a running list of every sloth fact we learned while we were there. Here are some of our favorites:

1) They eat dirt for minerals. They literally stick their faces into the ground and munch.

2) When they are on the prowl for a sexual partner, a white milky substance comes out of their noses and eyes.

3) They sweat out of their noses.

4) Two-toed and three-toed sloths are as genetically different from each other as cats and dogs.

5) Two-toed sloths actually have three toes, but only two fingers.

6) They have tiny human-like ears that hide beneath their fur and they are the most absurdly cute things in the world.

7) They can't burp. We hope this doesn't make their stomachs hurt.

8) Their teeth turn black from all the leaves they eat. Skinny legends.

9) Their most developed sense is their smell.

10) They see better at night. This explains Leon's late-night escapades.

This is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to these fascinating creatures that have defied evolution and live happily in slow motion. Come find us to learn more, as sloths are (obviously) our favorite thing to talk about.

Our time at the Costa Rica Animal Rescue Center was the best of our lives. If you're passionate about something, we encourage you to indulge to the fullest extent possible. Leaning into our infatuation with sloths has undoubtedly made us happier people. We love sloths 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Not everything has to be in moderation.

# Resurrecting the Bird: Blackbird Literary and Visual Arts Journal

## Op-Ed

***Livia Cohen*** *is a member of the class of 2023.5.*

My name is Liv Cohen and I have one semester left at Middlebury College (I refuse to use the term super-senior Feb; I am sorry, it just makes me squirm, but that is beside the present point). The point is that I remember Middlebury in the fall of 2019 with all of the startling clarity of a terrified freshman. It was the last semester before the shit hit the fan, if you will, and one of the last semesters that Blackbird Literary and Visual Arts Journal was a vital part of campus life.

As I reflect on my time here, I realize that soon there will be no students left on campus who experienced Middlebury pre-pandemic; the days of Cabin, when one could still get nachos at the Grille after midnight and when we were sorted into a commons system for housing, Hogwarts Style. Middlebury College has become a very different place over the course of the past four years. I suppose that is part of the beauty of college, the constant flux and flow and change. Yet, as I prepare to leave, I realize that some of the structures and traditions of pre-pandemic Middlebury will die in student memory.

Aside from the downfall of Atwater Breakfast, one of the unfortunate consequences of the pandemic was the decline and extinction of countless student-run organizations and clubs. The most experienced members of many clubs graduated during the spring 2020 lockdown while regular meetings and events were unable to happen, leaving a chasm of the knowledge necessary for the underclassmen to pick up where their predecessors left off. Some clubs fell to the wayside without the mentoring that would typically take place. Middlebury's oldest literary and visual arts journal — Blackbird — was one such casualty. Blackbird was last published in the Spring of 2021. Soon, Blackbird will officially be lost in the collective memory of the student body come spring graduation.

For a liberal arts school, this is an enormous loss. At Middlebury, upholding the arts, and honing and celebrating student voices must be a priority. Thus, Emma Johnson (one of the last contributors to be published in BlackBird) and I are resurrecting the Bird.

The arts and humanities are under threat at colleges across the country. The attempt by Middlebury to remove the creative nonfiction position from the English department speaks volumes on the declining value the institution places on the arts. A quick Google search about the statistics of humanities majors across the country reveals an overall decline across the board (see The New Yorker's "The End of the English Major," Wall Street Journal's "The Decline of Liberal Arts and Humanities," The Hechinger Report, etc). Or read Sarah Miller's "In defense of the English Major" in The Campus for a thorough investigation and defense of this issue.

While institutional support falters, it falls to students to uphold and preserve the arts. The absence of Middlebury's oldest literary and visual arts journal is not just a reflection of the post-pandemic world, but a vital loss within a pattern of decline of the arts at Middlebury College. As a humanities major, I often feel as though my work exists in a vacuum. It is valued in the classroom and by my professors but is never considered something to be explored and discussed past the safe walls of Axinn and Munroe. Similarly, my entire education within the humanities is generally seen as a stepping stone. The arts are no longer valued as inherently important but as some kind of means of reaching something more 'serious' or 'real.'

Reviving Blackbird is a testament to the legacy of student creativity and art that once shaped the Middlebury community. As I begin my last semester, I want to leave a legacy that nurtures the arts that have been so integral to the shaping of my studies and myself. Picking up Blackbird from a two-year hiatus has been challenging. Yet, there is also a great opportunity for the journal to evolve and shift to reflect the current student body. The Board is exploring the ways in which the journal can be more accessible and fresh, whether that be with Zines, sharable PDFs or new forms of art. Blackbird is in a period of exciting evolution and rebirth that will provide new members with an unprecedented moment for creative license.

Blackbird is a place to share the work we hone in and out of the classroom, a place to experiment and a place to celebrate the creative endeavors on this campus. In sum, Blackbird will celebrate student's arts for the sake of arts.

To get involved with the crafting of the journal you can be a reader for the poetry, prose or visual arts boards, a layout editor, or help with spreading the word. If you are interested, reach out to blackbird@middlebury.edu to be added to the email list. Or, if you want to be featured, submit your work! We are accepting submissions now for the fall issue, looking for short-form visual and literary art. You can anonymize your document and send all writing as a Word doc.

Eternalize that poem, strange cartoon, self-portrait, essay, etc., and submit your work to blackbird@middlebury.edu.

EMMA JOHNSON/COURTESY PHOTO

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The Middlebury Campus

# IN PREVIEW: Student theatre this fall

By JONATHAN EATON
*Staff Writer*

COURTESY PHOTO

*Several student and faculty theatre productions will take place in Wright Memorial Theatre this semester.*

As the leaves begin changing, so too are the lights in Wright Theatre and the Hepburn Zoo. Middlebury student theater is back on its feet after a long summer, and the Middlebury community has much to look forward to this semester. Seven shows will be performed around campus — three directed by faculty and four by students.

For the two faculty-directed shows, the Middlebury Theatre Department has chosen to produce and perform "Polaroid Stories" by Naomi Iizuka and "Greek Tragedy" by Lia Romeo. "Polaroid Stories" will be directed by Professor of Theatre Alex Draper and "Greek Tragedy" by Associate Professor of Theatre Michole Biancosino.

"Polaroid Stories" takes a unique approach to combine the past with present, as Lizuka drew inspiration from the 8 CE Latin mythological poem "Metamorphoses" and from interviews with young people today. The effect is polaroid-like snapshots, portraying each character living on the edge of society, searching to be seen, to be loved or to disappear.

"The characters, with the struggles and upheavals of their lives refracted through myth, provide the opportunity for performers to step into personas much bigger than themselves," Draper wrote in an email to The Campus.

The production also features the work of Middlebury Alumnus Miguel Castillo '18, who is choreographing the movement within the show and playing the role of "D." The show will also feature soundscapes from Professor Miranda Hardy's course on sound design for film. "Polaroid Stories" will run from Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 in the Seeler Studio Theatre in Mahaney Arts Center.

"Greek Tragedy" by Lia Romeo is a play that chronicles the tale of an influencer who loses control of her life when her friend starts making her content for her. It addresses themes of mental health, friendship and addiction through the eyes of a young teen. This semester Biancosino wants her actors and stage managers to gain experience workshopping a new play with the playwright in the room. "Greek Tragedy" will uniquely re-orient the audience in Wright Memorial Theatre by rearranging the theatre itself.

"I'm excited to see the audience's response upon first entering the building — if you've been there to see a play before you will immediately need to adjust to a different relationship between the audience and the actors," Biancosino said.

The goal of the production is to uncover the magic of theatre by highlighting the unique mechanics, tropes and forms of theatre as an art.

"There is no message or core takeaway from most plays I'm interested in directing... I'm interested in these questions that are central to the play: How do we separate personal and our public lives? How can the images we project on social media entrap us into playing a certain kind of part? Since all storytelling is objective, who gets to control the narrative of a person's life?" Biancosino said.

"Greek Tragedy" will be performed in Wright Memorial Theatre from Oct. 26 through Oct. 28.

The theatre department also gets to showcase new faces through the annual "First Show," a unique opportunity for first-years to work on their first college show in a more casual setting. The 28th first-year show, "Look, Dream, Begin" is a series of new, short plays from around the world. It will be directed by alumnus Madison Middleton '22.5 and will feature a collaboration between the Theatre department and Climate Change Theater Action, a US-Canada-based Arts & Climate Initiative. This year's show will be performed Oct. 5 through Oct. 7 in the Hepburn Zoo.

Apart from the first-year show and faculty-directed plays this semester, four students are presenting their senior thesis productions and another is doing her 500-level production.

Beck Barsanti '23.5 is presenting an original work called "Dad Rock: A Selection of Scenes." The piece uses Bruce Springsteen songs to string together the scripts of eight classic plays, including Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" and Martin Vinogradov's "Coffin." Barsanti will play principal roles along with three other actors, while Bri Beach '24, Maggie Blake '24 and Gavin Richards '25.5 are working as a team of directors.

The show addresses themes of toxic masculinity from 15th century chivalry to contemporary misogyny and sexism. Barsanti was inspired to write "Dad Rock" after acting in the thesis project "Botticelli in the Fire" in spring 2022 by Madison Middleton '22.5 and Ryan Kirby '22. "Dad Rock" will be performed Nov. 2 through Nov. 4 in the Hepburn Zoo.

Beach, Annabelle Iredale '23.5 and Aidan Amster '23.5 are collaborating on a combined senior thesis production of "Storm Still," a contemporary musical adaptation of Shakespeare's "King Lear" written by Gab Riesman. The trio chose to produce and perform "Storm Still" because they wanted a script that offered three nuanced roles for women and incorporated the complexity and beauty of familial relationships. "Storm Still" will be performed Dec. 7 through Dec. 9 in the Hepburn Zoo.

Sophie Butler-Rahman '25 will direct "Beta Bitches" for her 500-level project this fall. "Beta Bitches" is a show about two friends who hold a séance to contact their dead friend, but when the séance goes wrong they are forced to confront the unexpected. The show explores themes of friendship and death, while the characters fight their demons on a trip to the underworld.

"I'm most excited about the hands-on collaboration aspect of the project that will involve the actresses. As it's a new play there's a lot of room to experiment with character choices and motives, and I look forward to bringing these girls who experience relatable friendship struggles to life," Butler-Rahman said.

"Beta Bitches" will be performed in the Hepburn Zoo from Nov. 9 to Nov. 11.

Topping off the fall season, the Middlebury College Musical Theatre (MCMT) club is producing and performing the Tony Award-winning "Twenty-Fifth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," written by Rachel Sheinkin with music and lyrics by William Finn. The show is a comical drama about a middle school spelling bee, which explores themes of teen angst and family drama over an energetic soundtrack. The production will be directed by Jonathan Mount '25.5.

"It's MCMT's first musical since "Big Fish," which was four semesters ago... The cast is so talented, and the show is incredibly funny and clever. I think the Middlebury community is going to love it, and I can't wait to see how it unfolds!" Mount said. The "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" will be performed on Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. in Wilson Hall.

From themes of cyberbullying, masculinity and education to familial grief, in settings from rural Putnam County to urban New York City, over soundtracks ranging from Springsteen to show tunes, this fall's theater docket has a lot to offer. If you are interested in seeing these wonderful productions come to life, tickets can be purchased on the box office website.

*Editor's note: Acadia Klepeis '24 is an Arts and Culture Editor for The Campus and is a member of MCMT as well as a member of the "Big Fish" cast.*

# *Middlebury mural makeover: Student revives silo with new artwork*

By SOPHIA AFSAR-KESHMIRI
*Opinions Editor*

COURTESY PHOTO

*Wyatt Robinson's summer was spent designing and painting the mural on the silo outside the Recycling Center.*

This summer, an often overlooked corner of campus got a makeover. Amidst unpredictable weather and on an unconventional canvas, architecture major Wyatt Robinson '24 successfully completed a vibrant mural encircling the silo outside the Recycling Center. The mural is one of the latest additions to Middlebury's outdoor art collection and is sure to become a community favorite.

Sponsored by the Middlebury College Innovation Hub, the project began way-back in the summer of 2022. Impressed by the Bridge School elementary school's new silo mural, Middlebury Language School alumna Cookie Tager decided to sponsor another project of the sort in the area; this time, with the help of Middlebury students. She brought the idea to the attention of the Innovation Hub.

Tager's vision first came to life when Shane Silverman '24.5 began preparing the logistics in summer 2022 while interning for the Vermont Creative Network. Silverman first conducted a feasibility study for the Silo Transformation Project before creating a baseline for the location and timeline of the potential mural.

An artist in his free time, Robinson answered the call of an April announcement on behalf of the Innovation Hub that the department was in search of a student artist to pursue the summer painting phase of the project. Robinson was ultimately selected for his impressive attention to detail and robust project proposal, according to Silverman.

Now, five months after that initial email, Robinson's mural capturing a vibrant, almost psychedelic interpretation of Vermont flora and fauna decorates the Silo's surface. Electric greens and yellows fill in black-outlined ferns and flowers, while splotches of white represent the forms of a bobcat, an owl and other animals. Massive raindrop-shaped splotches of blue mimic the splashing of a fish, which can be seen leaping beyond the top edge of the mural.

"The bobcat and the area surrounding the bobcat's face [are] my favorite [part] of the whole thing. I just like the color palette — this pinky gray. It's really simple, but adds a lot of depth," Robinson said.

He also admired the abstract ripples that fill parts of the mural without any plant or animal subject matter. The ripples create a feeling of movement on what is otherwise a rigid surface, Robinson said. As he filled more and more of his metal, cylindrical canvas with creatures and waves, his painting process evolved.

"At a certain point, I stopped using my reference. I just felt so comfortable with what I'd been doing that I could kind of keep the exact same aesthetic, more just on the fly without having to cross-reference every line I was making," Robinson said.

While Robinson raved about the creative process, the project did not come without its challenges. Operating amidst drastic flooding this summer, Robinson had no choice but to work around nature's schedule to avoid paint running in the rain.

"I had to be more connected to my environment than I think I had ever been before," Robinson said. "There was one day when I was doing the moose, I packed up and ended up returning on three separate occasions because I was kind of listening to the clouds, feeling the pressure."

Getting the final finishing touches onto the surface also proved challenging. Robinson described feeling a lack of motivation towards the end of his painting process, but seeing people come and visit his mural ultimately reinvigorated his dedication to the project. Robinson recalled one particular group of visitors that fueled his finale.

"One day I came down, there were a bunch of little kids running in circles around it," Robinson said.

He recalled fielding questions such as, "Why do all the animals have yellow eyes? Except for the bear?" Robinson explained that their energetic curiosity spurred him back into action, motivating him to complete the project.

"It was maybe the most fulfilling thing I've done. It was an amazing experience," Robinson

# Zach Bryan and the summer of country

By MAGGIE BRYAN
*Senior Arts & Culture Editor*

Thick southern accents and what seems like an inescapable culture of patriotism, beer and fried chicken deter many from country music's twangy offerings, often limiting the genre to a specific audience. But this summer witnessed a steady presence of country ballads at the top of the charts. In August, four consecutive country songs, Jason Aldean's "Try That in a Small Town," Morgan Wallen's "Last Night," Oliver Anthony's "Rich Men North of Richmond," and Zach Bryan's "I Remember Everything (feat. Kacey Musgraves)," led Billboard's ranks at number one. The only other time this happened was 1975, and even then the songs were not consecutive. The new reach of country culture extends all the way to Middlebury, where cowboy boots and hats have become a party staple and students drive multiple hours to out-of-state country concerts.

From Nashville-based stars like Morgan Wallen and Jason Aldean to unheard-of one-hit wonder Oliver Anthony, country music staked its place in popular culture this summer. But when it comes to who can be credited with country music's newfound appeal across the country and here at Middlebury, the answer may not even be a country artist. Armed with a fusion of musical influences, an unparalleled level of authenticity and a uniquely Oklahoman accent, Zach Bryan has redefined the boundaries of what is considered country, all while capturing the hearts of music enthusiasts far and wide.

Hailing from Oologah, Okla., Bryan has been writing songs since he was 14. In 2013, at age 17, he enlisted in the Navy and served for eight years, during which he wrote and recorded music. In 2016, Bryan's mother passed away at the age of 49 due to complications from addiction. Her death marked a pivotal point in Bryan's career, which he credits with deepening his songwriting. Later that year, Bryan began releasing his first singles and posting videos to social media, which garnered a growing fan base and internet virality. In 2021, Bryan was honorably discharged from the Navy to pursue his music career and immediately went on tour. Less than a year later in May 2022, he released his first full-length album, "American Heartbreak." Bryan's rise to fame is remarkable, inexplicable and above all, quintessentially American.

On Aug. 25, Bryan released his second full-length album, "Zach Bryan." He had hinted at the highly-anticipated record for months but did not provide a release date until a few weeks in advance, only revealing that the album might come out sometime in August. Despite Bryan's casual buildup to the release, the album quickly reached number one on Billboard's Top Albums and all 16 songs found their place on the Billboard Top 50. The most popular, "I Remember Everything (feat. Kacey Musgraves)," a gloomy post-breakup duet, landed at number one. After the release, Bryan has become, by some measures, the most popular artist of our time.

Yet Bryan's new levels of success have not allowed him a restful hiatus. Shortly after the album's release, Bryan was arrested for obstructing an officer in Oklahoma. Meanwhile, his new relationship with internet personality Briana LaPalagia has brought its own attention and controversy. But among fans, the events seem to have had minimal impact. Spotify even used Bryan's mugshot as the cover photo for a playlist titled "Outlaw." If anything, his arrest has been endearing for the fans and character-building for the artist.

After issuing a sincere apology video and a dismissal of the hate towards his relationship, Bryan has maintained his momentum. In fact, the musician's responses to the events seem to have amplified his authenticity, while also building an old country persona similar to the likes of Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash's outlaw-highwaymen antics. Maintaining his accessible, unguarded nature, Bryan spent the past weeks teasing new music with collaborators on social media. And after it all, continuing in his spirit of spontaneity, this past Friday, Bryan released a surprise EP.

The new EP, "Boys of Faith," is the ultimate testament to Bryan's mastery of genre-straddling, encompassing flairs of country, rock, folk and Americana. Critics have a difficult time classifying Bryan's genre, sometimes hesitating to apply the country label. Bryan himself has made an effort to distance himself from Nashville-based country institutions, even mocking stereotypical country culture in certain songs. The new EP builds on this existing confusion with features from Vermont native Noah Kahan and indie folk band Bon Iver. On "Boys of Faith," Bryan leans into the electric guitar but stays loyal to his staples: banjo, acoustic guitar, fiddle and piano.

Middlebury's crunchy culture is undoubtedly a hotspot for Bryan's folk-country hybrids, and his local fan base certainly appreciates his cross-genre nature. But even more than the music itself, Middlebury students love Bryan's lyrics.

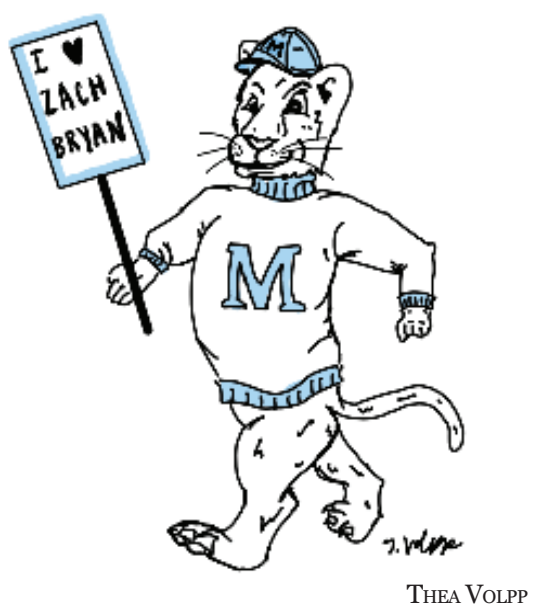
Chris O'Connell '24 saw Bryan perform this past summer and recently endured a hectic Ticketmaster experience to get a seat for his show next summer.

"I would say what draws me most to Zach Bryan's music is his genuine and rich songwriting. He is able to not only set a vivid scene, but tell a story filled with emotion that comes through super clearly… He has a lot of common themes but the ones that stand out to me the most and that I connect best with are nostalgia, living in the moment and finding the little joys in life." O'Connell said.

Caitlin Smith '25 has been listening to Bryan's music since 2020 when she fell in love with the song "Heading South." Smith also cited Bryan's lyrics as his main draw.

"I feel like the music behind the lyrics is pretty simple and relatively consistent throughout his songs but the lyrics are telling such a complex story and conveying complicated emotions. The mix of these things makes his music really beautiful and easy to listen to. He's not trying too hard to make his music something that it's not," Smith said.

Smith and O'Connell are not the only ones who resonate with Bryan's lyrics and persona. Bryan's authenticity, spontaneity and rejection of big-time country institutions feel refreshingly youthful. When coupled with nostalgic themes and the poetic nature of his lyrics, Bryan's work provides a suitable sound for the background of college life and much more. From my 14-year-old brother to my 50-year-old dad, it is safe to say that Bryan's music has something to offer for everyone, even for those without the same last name.



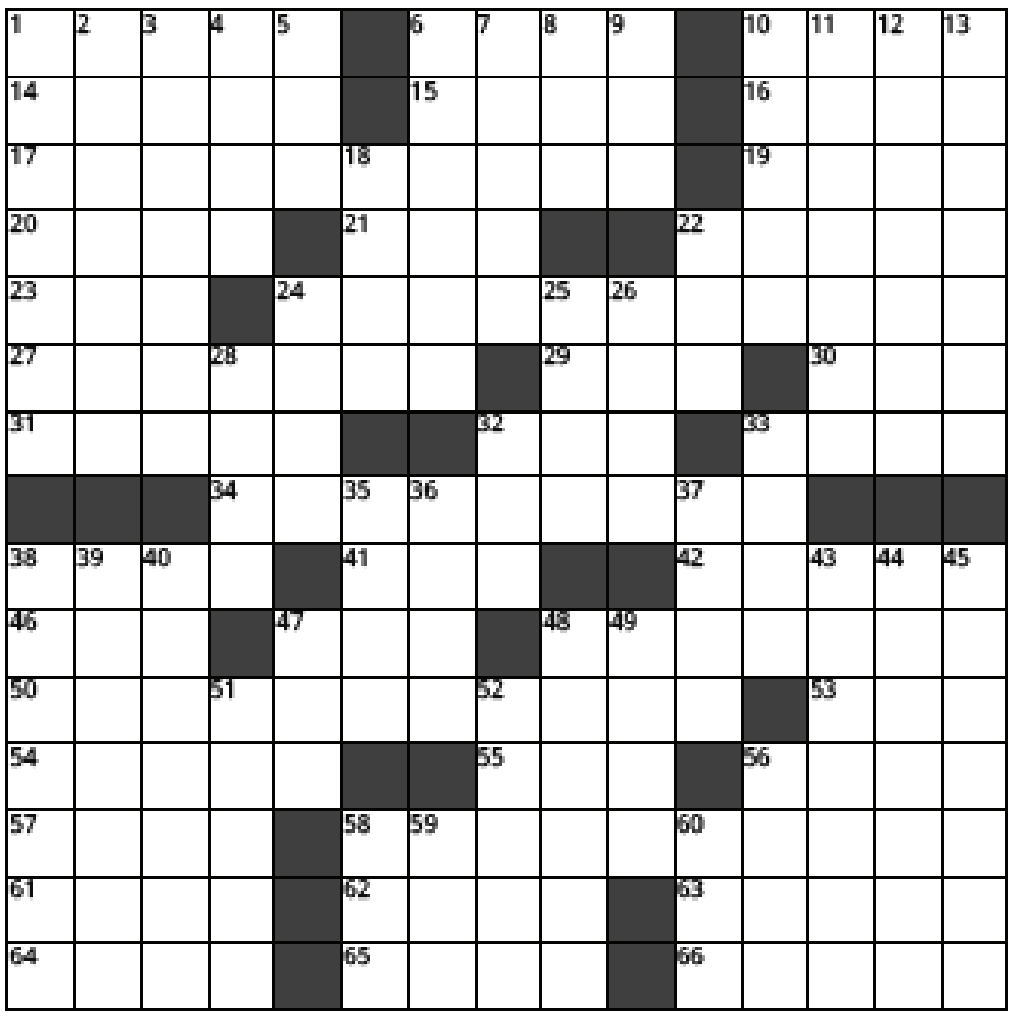
THEA VOLPP

## How Do You Measure a Year?

Josh Harkins

**ACROSS**
1 Pines (for)
6 Performed the trick end of a Halloween question, perhaps
10 Chest muscles, for short
14 Larceny
15 Grinder cousin
16 Exam type
17 *Phenomena brought on by many a 50-Across*
19 Bait
20 Things to chew on
21 Bud
22 Soup spoon
23 Prefix with -puncture
24 *Member of the band behind "Down by the Water" and "Sons & Daughters"*
27 "If you mowed your lawn and you found a car, you might be a ___." per Jeff Foxworthy
29 Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan
30 Shirt option
31 Ideal
32 Jazz legend Calloway
33 Await judgement
34 Magazines that come out about a dozen times a year, and a hint to the four italicized clues
38 Modern art gallery in London
41 Signal to go on
42 Massachusetts governor Healey
46 Pig abode
47 Fam member
48 Absolutely enchanted
50 *Downpour that could start foolishly and end with some 17-Across*
53 Pilot's announcement, for short
54 "___, set, go!"
55 Maj. superior
56 Uptight
57 Hamlet, for one
58 *Movie about the rocket boys of Coalwood*
61 Prefix with -gon
62 Red sky in the morning or the night, for sailors
63 Layers of toilet paper
64 Snafu
65 They can be saturated
66 "The Planets" composer

**DOWN**
1 Payment method with a PIN
2 "Canterbury Tales" author
3 "Yesterday" parody song
4 Grades worse than dees
5 Cardinals, on scoreboards
6 Apt rhyme for "smack"
7 Director Jordan
8 Slip up
9 Uno + uno
10 Bear whose fur is translucent
11 Learned
12 Chess grandmaster Magnus
13 Idly rained
18 Fossil fuel cartel
22 Spearheaded
24 Trial version
25 Breakfast or dinner
26 Israeli PM Netanyahu, informally
28 Identify
32 Revolutionary Guevera
33 Test for many jrs.
35 Show with spinoffs in NOLA and LA, among others
36 Bottom
37 Qatari leader
38 Former Russian realm that, when you swap it's first two letters, means fame
39 Tranquil
40 Despots
43 Spoon, e.g.
44 Films again
45 "I can't go to Yemen, I'm an ___t" -Jack Ryan
47 Foxy
48 Faints
49 Scary Spice
51 Products of brainstorming
52 The planets
56 Folk legend Guthrie
58 "That sounds painful"
59 Nashville-based awards org.
60 Williams athlete



# Hirschfield International Film Series returns

By JACK TORPEY
*Arts & Culture Editor*

After over a yearlong hiatus, the Hirschfield International Film Series is returning to Middlebury College. The upcoming Oct. 5 screening of "The Royal Hotel" marks the series' first event since May 2022, offering the college community the chance to see an Australian social thriller the day before it is released in theaters, following its recent run at the Telluride and Toronto film festivals.

For film enthusiasts like John McCulloch '24, a Hirschfield Programming Committee Member and Film and Media Culture major, the comeback of this Middlebury cinematic tradition is a major victory.

"It's really great to be able to bring a diversity of films to a college campus like Middlebury," McCulloch said. "But also to give students exposure to just how diverse that palette is [by] just taking films from all different continents and being able to have that sort of representation on a college campus."

Diversity and representation are the hallmarks of the Hirschfield International Film Series, which has run for decades as an exciting way to introduce students largely raised on Hollywood films to the best in modern world cinema.

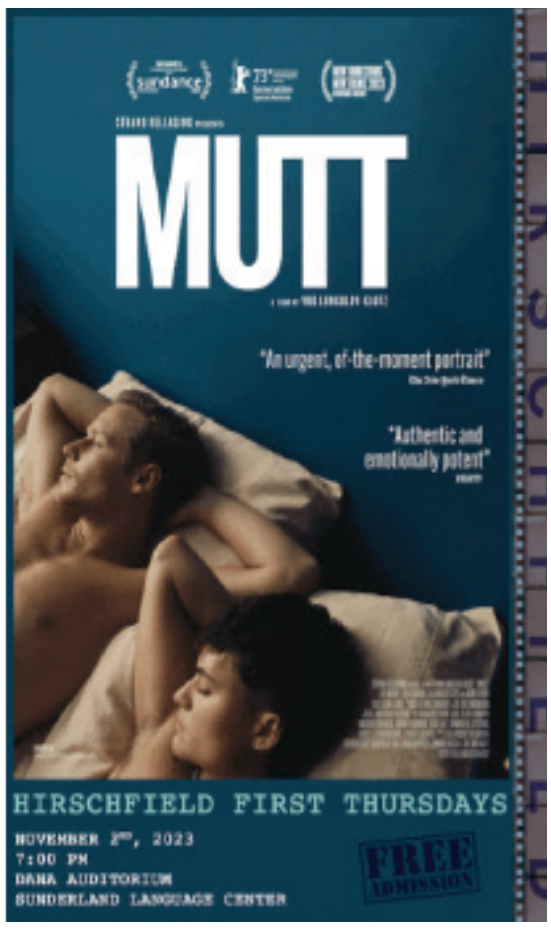
"It's basically an initiative from the Film and Media department to bring together these contemporary arthouse films that have been theatrically released around the world," McCulloch said. "We try to focus on that sweet spot between theatrical releases that are out in the world but are not yet on demand or streaming."

The series' pedigree of screened titles is impressive. In just the past four years, Hirschfield has featured two Best Picture winners, "Parasite" and "Everything Everywhere All at Once," bringing the former to Middlebury at a time when it was only playing in New York and Los Angeles, long before it blew up into a pop culture phenomenon during the awards season, and the latter in April 2022. Other notable films screened at Hirschfield, which also shows American independent films, are Boots Riley's "Sorry to Bother You," Jia Zhangke's "Ash is Purest White" and Ryûsuke Hamaguchi's "Drive My Car."

Acquiring such globally renowned films for exhibition on a small Vermont college campus is no easy feat. After taking charge of Hirschfield's programming committee in 2018, Ethan Murphy, media production specialist for the college, spent the next four years overseeing the process of contacting distributors, securing screeners and evaluating films for presentation. It was under his guidance that smash hits "Parasite" and "Everything Everywhere All at Once" found their way to Middlebury, emerging as the highlights of a period that saw weekly screenings being held virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic and then in Axinn 232 once occupancy limits were lifted. But Murphy could not run the series alone. Staffing shortages ultimately rendered it unsustainable, bringing a flourishing era of Hirschfield to an abrupt end.

For a year, no Hirschfield films were screened at Middlebury College. Then came David Miranda Hardy, associate professor of film and media culture, and a contingent of motivated film students committed to saving this cinematic experience. Hardy, a filmmaker and sound designer who created the Peabody Award-nominated Chilean show "Bala Loca," never intended on leaving Hirschfield for dead.

"I believe in film, in its power to create community, to inspire thoughtful conversations, to reflect about the world and society," Hardy said. "I think these kinds of community-building experiences are a very important contribution to what a college experience should be."




COURTESY PHOTO
*This semester's Hirschfield Series features "The Royal Hotel" and "Mutt."*

After being revamped over the summer by Hardy and his team, the Hirschfield International Film Series returns this fall with a new look: one-night-only screenings in Dana Auditorium on the first Thursday of each month, or "Hirschfield First Thursday Films." Programming will remain consistent with the series' original mission, but the organizers are hoping that the monthly schedule, upgraded venue and pre-screening pizza party will serve to make Hirschfield more of a campus-wide event than it ever was before.

They are also counting on "The Royal Hotel," which follows a pair of young American women who take jobs as bartenders in a seedy Australian pub, to open the proceedings with a bang.

"I mean, it's clearly a gripping thriller where you're going to probably question a few assumptions of what you believe about sexual violence. I think it's both going to be food for thought and highly gripping entertainment," Hardy said.

Despite their thorough preparations for the event, neither he nor McCulloch can predict whether the revival of the Hirschfield International Film Series will be a successful one. Hardy remarked that demand for more screenings per month would be a good indicator that they did something right. For now, though, he and the Hirschfield team are just happy to see international and independent cinema screenings back on campus. Next week's opening night will be the first time in a while that students and faculty who live for those two hours in the dark can come together to explore their passion and find community among those who share it.

Say what you will about sequels, but that sounds like a part two worth sticking around to see.

The Hirschfield International Film Series' fall 2023 season kicks off on Thursday, October 5 at 7 p.m. with an exclusive screening of "The Royal Hotel" in Dana Auditorium. Join fellow audience members outside Dana at 6:30 p.m. for pizza before the film.

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# MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TENNIS TEAMS OFF TO A STRONG START

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
*Editor at Large*

Although the fall season is short, it is off to a sweet start for both the men's and women's tennis teams. Both teams opened their season the weekend of Sept. 16 and have begun gearing up for the regional and cup Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) competitions.

The men's team kicked off their season at the Middlebury Invitational on Sept. 16–17, hosting seven teams in a series of single and double matches. Julian "Juju" Wu '26 claimed the top spot for the Panthers, bringing his career singles play record to 29–4.

"We had someone win the Midd Invite, which is a new thing for us," said Noah Laber '24, one of the men's team captains. "We don't historically have a lot of success at the Midd Invite, so that was really exciting. We're definitely having more success at home than we're used to, especially early in the season when sometimes people aren't as prepared."

While the men's team hosted the Middlebury Invitational, the women's team traveled to Skidmore College that weekend to compete in the Thoroughbred Invitational. Four players went undefeated during singles play, while doubles team Amy Delman '24 and Sahana Raman '25 went a perfect 4–0.

This past weekend, the women's team traveled to Wesleyan University to compete in the ITA Regional Championship. Raman and Delman finished second in the ITA Doubles Regional Competition, earning an automatic bid to play the ITA Cup in Rome, Ga., Oct. 12-16.

"It has been exciting to be all together again at practice, and traveling helped show us all how much fun we have during match weekends," Sami Remis '24, one of the women's team captains, wrote in an email to The Campus. "We are very supportive of one another, and everyone has such a positive attitude at matches and practice so that we can continue to get better."

The women's team is preparing for another away weekend at Bowdoin's Polar Bear Invitational Oct. 7–8. Remis said she is excited to play at home later in the season.

"I am looking forward to our home invite in October, where we get to play at the Proctor courts. It is always fun to play at home!" Remis wrote. "We are all getting excited to compete in our season in the spring."

The men's team will next play in Brunswick, Maine, on Sept. 29 – Oct. 1 for their ITA Regional Championship. Laber predicts that being on the road will help his team zone in on the game.

"When we're on the road, we're more focused on tennis. When we're home, we have friends here; it's easier to do school work and go to the library late at night," Laber said. "It's just a different level of focus we can bring to an away match that we haven't really fostered here."

Joe Mairs '24, another men's team captain, is excited by the mix of athletic talent across class years.

"We're returning almost the entire team plus three freshmen. We got some new guys coming up and guys who are hungry to get in the lineup. It's going to be a fun, competitive season this year," Mairs said.

Overall, the Panthers are looking forward to a competitive fall tennis season.

"We definitely have some chances to do things there especially with players like [Wu] and promising freshmen, as well as seasoned returners who have proven themselves, especially in the last couple of weeks," Laber said. "There's a lot to look forward to."

WILL C IMAGES / COURTESY PHOTO

*Julian "Juju" Wu '26 lunges for the ball at the Middlebury Invitational, where he was crowned singles champion.*

# ROOKIE OF THE WEEK: AUDREY MACLEAN '27

By CHARLES CROUNSE
*Senior Sports Editor*

WILL C IMAGES / COURTESY PHOTO

*Audrey Maclean leads the field at the Aldrich Invitational.*

Welcome back to another edition of Rookie of the Week, where we interview first-year athletes making a major impact in their chosen sport. This week, I sat down with Audrey MacLean '27 of women's cross country, who has finished in the top two in all three of the Panthers' races this fall, to talk about her background in running, her goals for the season and her favorite runs in Middlebury.

**Charles Crounse:** We'll start with the obligatory "Why here" question — what was it that drew you to Middlebury?

**Audrey MacLean:** I was looking for a smaller, division three liberal arts school, but most of what appealed to me was the team. Everybody seemed super close and super supportive of each other, and as soon as I met the team I thought 'Okay, I want to be in an environment like this.' That was definitely the main selling point for me.

**CC:** You're from California: How have you found running here compared to running back home?

**AM:** The running is definitely very different. I lived in an extensive trail system so I would do a lot of trail running with hills. Here, there are much more dirt roads, so it's fun because it's different. Back at home, I wouldn't really do a lot of big group runs so I would mostly run on my own or with a few other girls. Here, it's super fun because all of our runs are super fun because it's a huge pack of people going down the road.

**CC:** Do you have a favorite run you've done at Middlebury so far?

**AM:** We sometimes run through Battell Woods, and I definitely love the trails, so I think I like those runs the best.

**CC:** Did you always know you wanted to run in college or was that only something that you thought of later on?

**AM:** I first started running on a team in my freshman year of high school. Before that I played a bunch of other sports like soccer, lacrosse and swimming, but I never really had a serious passion for any of them. Occasionally I would go for a run with my mom or my dad because they both run casually, so then I joined the [cross country] team in high school. I really liked the people on the team and loved the act of running, which a lot of people might not agree with, but I think it's super fun and it became an everyday thing. I'm happier when I get to run every day, and so I thought the best way to weave that into college life was to be on a team. And I've really liked having that group of people around me.

**CC:** Now that you are racing, you've come in second place twice and first place once. Was that what you were expecting to happen in your first collegiate races?

**AM:** I had no idea what I was expecting. I came in here blindly thinking this would just be a fun thing and was mostly just excited to be part of the team. I am excited about the races too, but I wasn't really expecting that. It was a nice bonus.

**CC:** After a race or a hard workout, do you have a favorite way to unwind outside of running?

**AM:** Right after a race, I enjoy getting a meal with the team and decompressing or talking about the race. A lot of the races have long bus rides to get back from the competition, so singing along to whatever song people are playing and just debriefing the race is usually what we do.

**CC:** Looking ahead toward the rest of the season, do you have any specific goals for yourself or for the team?

**AM:** Last year, I know the team had some trouble with injuries, so I'm hoping that later in the season everyone is healthy enough to race and be involved in the racing. A team goal is for everyone to be able to run and race their best. Another goal is to make it to the NCAA [championship], since I don't think that happened last year.

**CC:** When you are training, do you have a favorite workout that you get excited for?

**AM:** Yes, I do. This is not a popular opinion, but I really like the hill workouts. On Tuesdays we've been going to Chipman Hill to run hill repeats, and I think they're super fun. I've always been drawn to hills and climbing things, and maybe that's because of where I grew up or what my family likes to do. That's definitely my favorite workout, especially since we get to do them on trails and there are nice views at the top.

**CC:** Have you had a favorite moment at Middlebury since you got here?

**AM:** I don't know. Maybe one general theme is the locker room dance parties with the disco lights and the big speakers, but it's hard to pick one moment. The other day we went up to Falls of Lana on a whim to watch the sunset, and we missed the sunset but we sat there as a team and watched the afterglow which was really nice. I really like everything about Middlebury so far.

# Seven Questions with Joely Virzi '24, women's soccer

MOLLY HARRISON
*Contributing Writer*

Joely Virzi '24 is starting her fourth and final year on the Middlebury women's soccer team. She was a top scorer for the team last season and is on top of the scoring charts again this year as the team heads into conference play. In this installment of Seven Questions, Virzi discusses what she loves most about Middlebury, the soccer team and her time as an athlete the past three years.

**Molly Harrison:** How is your senior year going so far?

**Joely Virzi:** It's really fun, I think starting off in preseason with the team is always such a good ease into the semester. I was abroad my junior spring so I missed the team a lot, so it was really good to see everyone's faces again and just start playing soccer because I really missed it. So far my classes have been awesome, I really love my professors and my class sizes are small and very engaging. Basically, it has just been really nice to see everyone after being abroad — all my track teammates, all my soccer teammates and all my friends that I didn't see while I was abroad. It is good to be back in the Middlebury bubble.

**MH:** What position do you play in soccer and what do you like about it?

**JV:** I am an outside forward, but I play anywhere my coach needs me on the attacking side of the field. I love it because you always have an opportunity to change the game. Your team relies on you to score the goals, you just always have to be ready to go and finish when you need to for your team. But I also love that it's not just scoring goals and creating opportunities, you also have to track back and do the work defensively. I also love how you can always form connections with your teammates up top and be super creative on the ball.

**MH:** What is your favorite Middlebury soccer memory?

**JV:** I would say my sophomore year [in 2021], which was my first season because of Covid-19. We started off pretty low in the NESCAC and kept losing games, but we knew we were really good and had potential. Then we kind of climbed our way back into the rankings, and we had two big penalty kick shootout wins in the NESCAC semifinals and the finals. So it was just a really hard fought season and we overcame a lot, and we ended up winning the NESCAC championship. So, that's probably my favorite memory, just when it finally all paid off.

**MH:** Do you have any favorite team traditions?

**JV:** My favorite is probably the day before a game, we have a lighter practice. We have these bins in the locker room filled with so many ridiculous outfits and colors, shirts, dresses, sunglasses, literally every accessory. We dress in funny clothing, in the colors of the team you are playing for your game. Some people go really hard and they show up to practice in a really funky dress and sunglasses and face paint. It's fun because we still have a good practice but it makes it a little more lighthearted. Also, on gameday in the locker room when all of the coaches come in, we always start off with a random group of three or four people who go up and sing a song. They replace the lyrics with their own lyrics, and a lot of it is inside jokes of the team. It all just relates to our team. So, it's a fun song that you sing, and then you pass it off secretly to another person to do it for the next game.

**MH:** Aside from soccer, what made you want to come to Middlebury?

**JV:** I knew I wanted to go somewhere where I would be challenged academically and surrounded by motivated, creative individuals. Middlebury felt like a second home instantly — from the beautiful Vermont landscape to the incredible people, it had the perfect combination of everything.

**MH:** Now that you have been here for almost four years, is there anything about your time playing soccer here that is different from how you imagined it would be coming in as a freshman?

**JV:** Yes, I feel like it has been a lot grittier than I anticipated. In high school, it is pretty calm and you are the star of your team in high school. Then you get to college and it is just fun to be with thirty or so people who all share the same work ethic that you do. The games aren't easy. In high school and before that, you always have a hard game that you look forward to and then you have some easier ones. In the NESCAC, I feel like every game is so intense, so it is just a really fun bonding experience to be with thirty of your best friends to grind out these really hard games.

**MH:** What is your favorite activity when you are not playing soccer?

**JV:** I always like going to all of the different water holes in Vermont. I went to Bristol Falls twice already this year; I love going to Dunmore and driving to see the sunsets there. I think it is just fun to take advantage of the Vermont landscape and go on hikes, especially when the leaves are changing colors.

WILL C IMAGES / COURTESY PHOTO

*Joely Virzi '24 controls the ball near the corner flag in a 9-0 win over Plattsburgh.*